

UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00 INRE-00 /050-W
-----096724 232157Z /66

O 232100Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3385
USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 8893

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS) SOPN, SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL REACTS STRONGLY AGAINST
U.S. CORRESPONDENTS

1. IN A HIGHLY UNUSUAL MOVE, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY PRESS
SECRETARY CALLED IN THE USIS PRESS OFFICER ONLY HOURS
AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF SECRETARY VANCE TO ACCUSE CORRESPONDENTS
KAREN DEYOUNG, WASHINGTON POST AND JUAN DE ONIS, NY TIMES,
OF PUBLISHING STORIES ON THE DAY OF SECRETARY VANCE'S
ARRIVAL WITH THE INTENTION OF DISRUPTING ARGENTINE-U.S.
RELATIONS. THE SPOKESMAN SAID SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE HOUR
AND 15 MINUTE LONG SERIES OF FULMINATIONS AGAINST THE
CORRESPONDENTS THAT HE WAS ACTING ON HIS OWN AND THAT HE
WAS NOT MAKING AN OFFICIAL PROTEST ON THE PART OF THE
GOA.

2. THE SPOKESMAN, NAVY CAPTAIN ROBERTO PEREZ FROIO SAID
HE HAD JUST RENEWED JUAN DE ONIS' VISA "IN SPITE OF MILITARY
PRESSURE TO DENY IT". HE ADDED THAT THE MILITARY HAS
"CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF HIS (ONIS') LINKS WITH LEFTIST
GUERRILLAS". THE USIS PRESS OFFICER ASKED WHAT THE MINISTRY

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WAS GOING TO DO ABOUT THE ARTICLES AND PEREZ FROIO SAID THAT HE HAD CALLED DE ONIS IN YESTERDAY (MONDAY) AND THEY WOULD "TALK AGAIN" WHEN ONIS RETURNED FROM THE VANCE TRIP. NO MENTION WAS MADE OF PLANS TO TALK TO KAREN DE YOUNG.

3. PEREZ FROIO SAID THE STORIES PUBLISHED ON THE EVE OF VANCE'S VISIT WERE PART OF A "CONSPIRACY TO UNDERMINE US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS". HE ADDED "HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT WHILE VANCE IS MEETING WITH MONTES, TODMAN WITH OTHER OFFICIALS, DERIAN WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP ALL SEEKING TO ESTABLISH A BETTER RELATIONSHIP, THESE U.S. PAPERS ARE ATTACKING ARGENTINA CALLING VIDELA AN ASSASSIN AND PUBLISHING PURE LIES". HE CHARACTERIZED THE STORIES AS "EXTREMELY DETRIMENTAL" (PERIODISMO LAPIDARIO) AND "VICIOUS". PEREZ FROIO COMPLAINED THAT THE ONLY WIREPHOTOS OF THE VISIT TO BE SENT ABROAD BY THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES SHOWED THE MOTHERS PROTESTING AT THE SAN MARTIN PLAZA. THIS WAS ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION OF THE "CONSPIRACY" HE SAID.

4. AN ARGENTINE CORRESPONDENT WHO COVERS THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TOLD THE USIS PRESS OFFICER JUST BEFORE HE ENTERED PEREZ FROIO'S OFFICE THAT THE PRESS CHIEF WAS "VERY DISTURBED" AND HAD BEEN CALLING IN LOCAL AND FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THEIR COVERAGE OF THE VANCE VISIT AND OTHER EVENTS. THIS CORRESPONDENT ADDED THAT HE DIDN'T THINK PEREZ FROIO HAD ANY RIGHT TO DO THIS ASKING "WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?"

5. COMMENT: DESPITE HIS DISCLAIMERS THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS PEREZ FROIO WAS ACTING ON ORDERS FROM HIS SUPERIORS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE INCIDENT MARKED THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE MILITARY TAKEOVER THAT AN INFORMATION OFFICIAL OF THE GOA HAS
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MADE THIS UNUSUAL COMPLAINT TO AN EMBASSY OFFICER. PEREZ FROIO WAS NOT EXPLICIT IN JUST WHAT IT WAS HE EXPECTED PRESS OFFICER TO DO WITH THE INFORMATION GIVEN, MAKING ABUNDANTLY CLEAR ONLY THAT PEREZ FROIO WAS ANGRY WITH CORRESPONDENTS WHO IN HIS VIEW WERE "DAMAGING BILATERAL RELATIONS." THE PRESS OFFICER EXPLAINED SEVERAL TIMES THAT FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IS A REALITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND THAT THE MEDIA ARE IN NO WAY UNDER USG CONTROL.

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6. EMBASSY SUBSEQUENTLY RAISED THIS MATTER WITH ESPECHE GIL,
HEAD OF NORTH AMERICAN DEPARTMENT AT MFA, FOR CLARIFICATION OF
PEREZ FROIO'S INTENT AND AN EXPLANATION OF WHY THE DEMARCHE
WAS MADE. ESPECHE GIL PROMISED A REPLY BY THE END OF THE
WEEK.
CASTRO

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